

son, Dr. John W., Livermore; Roberts, Dr. W. H., Pasadena; Richardson, Dr. W. W., Los Angeles; Rowell, Dr. Henrietta, Berkeley; Regensburger, Dr. Martin, San Francisco; Rucker, Dr. W. C., U. S. R. H. and M. H. S.; Reinhardt, Dr. G. F., Berkeley; Rooney, Dr. R. F., Auburn; Rowell, Dr. H., Berkeley; Reinle, Dr. Geo. G., Oakland.

Sawyer, Dr. W. B., Riverside; Simpson, Dr. J. A., San Francisco; Soiland, Dr. Albert, Los Angeles; Stratton, Dr. R. T., Oakland; Simmons, Dr. S. E., Sacramento; Southard, Dr. W. Y., San Francisco; Stephens, Dr. B., San Francisco; Schmoll, Dr. E., San Francisco; Shoey, Dr. Sarah, Oakland; Smart, Dr. W. W., San Diego; Sewall, Dr. Edward C., San Francisco; Stillman, Dr. Stanley, San Francisco; Swan, Dr. Benj. R., San Francisco; Spencer, Dr. John C., San Francisco; Simpson, Dr. Wm., San Jose; Stookey, Dr. L. B., Los Angeles; Smith, Dr. Q. C., San Diego; Sweet, Dr. E. A., San Diego.

Taltawall, Dr. Wm. A., Redlands; Thompson, Dr. G. S., Gridley; Thomas, Dr. Hayward, Alameda; Tait, Dr. F. Dudley, San Francisco; Trew, Dr. Neil C., Los Angeles; Thayer, Dr. O. C., San Diego; Toland, Dr. C. G., Pomona; Tebble, Dr. Fria H., Weed; Teas, Dr. C. J., Kennett.

Whitelock, Dr. Thos. S., San Diego; Welty, Dr. Cullen F., San Francisco; Woolsey, Dr. P. C., Berkeley; Winstrip, Dr. W. A., San Diego; Welsh, Dr. Prudence M., Long Beach; Walker, Dr. Horatio, Los Angeles; Wallace, Dr. T., Shasta Co.; Wills, Dr. LeMoyne, Los Angeles; Wakefield, Dr. W. F. B., San Francisco.

Vonder-Lieth, Dr. H., San Francisco; Von Zwalenburg, Dr. C., Riverside.

DELEGATES PRESENT.

Alameda—O. D. Hamlin, H. N. Rowell, J. L. Milton, Daniel Crosby, G. F. Reinle, H. G. Thomas.

Fresno—G. H. Hare.

Kern—W. S. Fowler.

Los Angeles—W. H. Kiger, Jos. M. King, F. C. E. Mattison, Hill Hastings, F. Garcelon, G. L. Cole, W. W. Richardson, Albert Soiland, W. H. Molony, G. MacGowan, J. Y. Oldham, S. P. Black, A. W. Pierce, F. Miller, C. G. Toland.

Monterey—T. C. Edwards.

Orange—Chas. D. Ball.

Placer—R. F. Rooney.

Riverside—W. B. Sawyer.

Sacramento—S. E. Simmons, A. M. Henderson.

San Bernardino—W. P. Burk.

San Diego—T. L. Magee, F. R. Burnham.

San Francisco—J. H. Barbat, A. W. Morton, H. C. Moffit, W. F. B. Wakefield, Dudley Tait, F. B. Carpenter, S. J. Hunkin, T. W. Huntington, H. D'A. Power, C. G. Levison, C. M. Cooper, A. A. O'Neill, E. G. McConnell, E. Schmoll, K. Pischel, M. Regensburger, E. Chipman, C. F. Welty, J. C. Spencer.

San Joaquin—A. W. Hoisholt.

San Luis Obispo—H. M. Cox.

San Mateo—A. M. Gardner.

Santa Barbara—Wm. T. Barry.

Santa Clara—Wm. Simpson.

Santa Cruz—Saxton Pope.

Shasta—C. J. Teass.

Solano—J. J. Hogan.

Sonoma—Edward Gray.

Ventura—W. R. Livingston.

THE WEBER MURDERS. WAS ADOLPH WEBER INSANE? *

By ROBERT F. ROONEY, M. D., Auburn.

On May 26th, 1904, the Placer County Bank was robbed during business hours by a lone robber. The act was spoken of at the time as either the work of an insane man, or that of an old and hardened criminal, utterly regardless of results. Conditions favored the robber, as no patron of the bank happened to enter whilst he was there, a thing which might not happen again for months. The cashier was absent for a few moments, the manager was in his private room, and but one man was behind the counter: a fact which the robber had no means of ascertaining previously. The robber entered and approached the cashier's window and presented a paper, demanding all the coin in the institution, backing up the demand with a leveled revolver. The clerk pretended not to understand the paper, trying to gain time, until some one entered. The bandit got impatient and sprang through the cashier's window (an act that could only be accomplished by a slim, active man), swept about \$6500 in gold into a sack which he had provided for the purpose, sprang back through the window and escaped from the building. He was seen by many people when he came out, but he ran rapidly down the street for half a block and seized a horse and light cart that happened to stand by the curbstone unattended, and made his escape out of town, followed by a few ineffective shots. The robber's only disguise was a clumsily constructed set of false whiskers, a slouch hat and common cotton overalls and jumper. These articles and a trifling .22 calibre revolver were found concealed in the brush near where the robber jumped out of the cart and made his escape into the thick chapparal, about half a mile outside of the city. No clew was obtained for months to the individuality of the robber but just previous to the murders whispers were circulated that Adolph Weber was suspected. These were regarded with incredulity, as it seemed impossible that a youth eighteen years old could be guilty of such a daring crime. The whole affair smacked of melodrama. The murders in the following October accentuated the previous suspicions, and minute search was made on the Weber premises, and finally \$5500 in gold was unearthed in the cowyard. This money was claimed by the bank, and no opposition was offered by Adolph, as sole heir to the estate.

On the 10th of the following October, between the hours of six and seven p. m., occurred the tragic murders of the Weber family, with the exception of the son Adolph, who then in his nineteenth year. This crime was so shocking in its cold-blooded barbarity that it excited the horror of the entire country, and even all English speaking nations. Now that it has almost passed from the minds of the public, and the murderer has suffered the extreme penalty for his deeds, I consider it incumbent upon myself to review the crime and

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the criminal from a strictly scientific standpoint, and try to determine the mental condition of the perpetrator at the time the crime was committed. You will all readily recall the startling stories with glaring headlines, narrated for weeks by the daily press, as to how a family of four persons were shot down in cold blood, in their own home, and an attempt at cremation made by burning the building. Julius Weber, the father, was shot through the heart whilst sitting on the toilet in the bath room. Mary, the mother, was shot through the chest, from one axilla to the other, probably whilst at the telephone calling for help, and again in the front of the chest, the bullet cutting the vena cava superioris near its entrance to the right auricle.

Bertha, the daughter, was also shot through the heart, and the little imbecile and crippled son, five years old, was beaten over the head with a blunt penetrating instrument, probably the hammer of a revolver, the latter having been grasped by the muzzle and used as a club. The smoke and gases of the burning house had completed what the weapon had begun, and the boy died in a moment after his rescue. The Weber home stood isolated on a hill in the outskirts of Auburn, and when discovered to be on fire, and no member of the family could be found, the whole household was supposed to have perished. However, in a few moments the son Adolph was found, coming out of a drygoods store where he had just purchased a new pair of trousers, and having the old pair that he had just taken off, held in a tightly rolled bundle under his arm. He ran lightly up to his burning home and going to a rear window broke the glass with his burden, at the same time hurling it into the flaming interior. He was not suspected of the crime at the time, and his actions were not closely noted, but it was afterward recalled by many that he seemed very cool and unconcerned throughout the excitement. When the bodies of his mother, sister and little brother were rescued, half charred and almost unrecognizable, some of the kind hearted neighbors, thinking that Adolph would be terribly shocked if he saw them, forcibly removed him from the scene and took him to the home of a friend of the family. I was called in to see him, as his condition was supposed to be bad, it having been understood for some time by the public that Adolph was weak and ailing. Before I arrived a rumor had spread that his mother was still alive. This rumor had reached him, and made him quite uncontrollable, he being determined to go and see for himself whether this was true. I saw him when in this excited state, but outside of a quiet but determined desire to go to his mother, he betrayed no symptom of excitement. His pulse was normal and he was not even paler than usual. I allowed him to go out in charge of two young men, and as soon as he ascertained that his mother was actually dead, he invited his companions to go into an *ice cream parlor and eat ice cream with him*. I will not take up any time in the details of these atrocious murders, but will pass on to

Family History.

Julius Weber, the father of Adolph, came from Germany when a boy, and had no relatives in this country. I can not give any details concerning him before he came to Auburn, as he was a very reticent man, and never spoke of his relatives to any one outside of his own family. He was a rather morose man, and had little to say to any one, even going around his own home for days without speaking a word. Could his history be traced it would no doubt be found that there was insanity somewhere amongst his progenitors. This, however, is but conjecture. He was an indulgent father, and gratified almost every wish of his children, of which he was very proud. He was a very healthy man, for I was family physician for twenty-five years and during that time I never treated him for anything but a broken leg. He was a brewer, and had accumulated a comfortable competence, amounting to about seventy thousand dollars.

The mother was also of German descent, with no history of insanity, or any of the nervous diseases. She was always healthy, both as a girl and woman, and had a cheerful temperament. The daughter Bertha was a bright, cheerful and intelligent girl, with considerable musical talent, normal in every way. The young son Earl, had severe convulsions when about one year old, and had an undeveloped and thickened skull. He had congenital talipes varus in both feet, and was an imbecile.

Adolph Weber was near the close of his nineteenth year when he committed his great crimes. He had no physical peculiarities, excepting a very long, straight nose, and a very sharp and protruding chin. His eyes were rather deep set and closer together than in the ordinary man. His complexion was callow and pasty. He was very light and agile on his feet, and was a good runner. He was born in normal labor; was a well developed child, and remained healthy until puberty. He had measles when about five years old, in a light form. Never had any of the other diseases of childhood, as far as I know, and as I was always the family physician, it would have been known to me if he had; and never had any disease accompanied with prolonged high temperature. He was a bright and promising boy, graduating from the grammar school in his fifteenth year, with an excellent standing in his class. He was very social in his ways during this period of his life, and companionable with his schoolmates of both sexes. During this time of his life, he was a loving and obedient son to his parents, and they were very proud of him, and his father destined him for a university course. When his little brother Earl was born, and until the latter was two years old, Adolph was perfectly devoted to him, spending hours daily in his care. He entered high school in his sixteenth year, and made good progress in his studies until about the close of the school, when he began to fall back in his lessons, and became irregular in his attendance, complaining about his health. At this

time he began to practise masturbation to excess. His second term in high school was entirely wasted, owing to desultory attendance, and he refused to attend at all after the holidays.

At this time he fitted up a room in the basement of a carriage shed and spent much of his time there. In it he carried on many senseless and cruel experiments on small animals and insects, torturing them in a cruel and abhorrent manner. His one amusement was in raising, training and fighting game chickens. If any of his chickens failed to win he would seize them, and literally rend them with his hands, and afterwards trample the mangled remains into the earth in wordless anger and with fiendish looks. He took long and solitary walks and runs, which kept him in good athletic training. He ceased all companionship with old schoolmates, holding little communication with any one saving one youth who had similar tastes in chicken fighting. He began to frequent brothels for the gratification of sexual desire; but even there he never un-bent from his unsocial ways, so I have been informed. He was fond of chess, and was far above the average amateur in skill at the game. He played correspondence chess for several weeks in the latter part of his eighteenth year; to my knowledge winning nearly all of them. When he was eighteen he came to me to be circumcised, which I promised to do if he would bring me his father's consent. He said he wanted it done to aid him in overcoming the habit of masturbation. On the following day he brought his father with him, and I circumcised him. About one month subsequently he came back complaining of vague nervous symptoms, which I attributed to the reading of quack literature. I assured him that there was nothing really affecting him, outside of his own imaginary ailments, but he was not satisfied. He returned in a few days, when I endeavored to gain his confidence, so that he would believe me when I assured him that he had no real illness, but he only got angry and claimed that he knew better, and that he had something very serious undermining his health. I then advised him to consult some other reputable physician, and if my diagnosis was confirmed, to rest satisfied, otherwise he would fall into the hands of the quacks, and afford rich gleanings to that predatory horde. He did consult Dr. G. A. White, of Sacramento, whose opinion coincided with my own. But being still unconvinced, he placed himself in the hands of an "electric healer;" went next to an advertiser for "the troubles of young men," winding up with an Osteopath, who found the true seat of the trouble, "a dislocated lumbar vertebra?" Finally he returned home minus about one thousand dollars of his father's coin, as the latter believed in his boy's ailments, and was willing to spend money freely for his aid. He was still a victim to imaginary troubles, and became a sufferer from all the ills brought about by constant introspection. From this time, he became very morose and sullen, resenting any and all control. He assumed lordly airs in his family relations. He would not arise until the day was well advanced;

ordered his meals to be cooked from specially prepared foods, and served separately and in state; became very abusive to his mother and sister, and often brutally struck his defenseless, imbecile brother, against whom he manifested a marked hatred. He would sit for long intervals in deep reveries, seemingly without breathing or winking, and if disturbed would snarl and scowl like a fiend. He went nowhere for the amusements of the young and normal man, but continued his frequent visits to the brothels.

Then came the robbery of the bank, followed by a visit of some weeks by the whole family to San Francisco. After his return Adolph became more morose and silent than before, and seldom spoke to any one of the family, save to order things done for him. He was seldom seen upon the streets, and then spoke only upon being addressed.

He spent his time mostly in brooding reveries, resenting any interference, and could not bear to be crossed in any way, flying into violent rages at trivial causes. He could not bear to be worsted in any way, either in argument, or even in a game of chess. His only amusements consisted in reading books concerning battles and bloodshed, with frequent visits to houses of ill-fame. During this period his mother frequently told her sister that she was afraid of Adolph, and that she considered herself in danger when he was in one of his rages.

Then came the murders, with quick suspicion of Adolph as the perpetrator. At the inquest, when in the presence of the blackened and charred bodies of his family, he never betrayed the least concern, or shed a tear. At the funeral, which he attended under guard, he still maintained his indifference, nonchalantly gazing in the faces of strong men weeping, and nodding to acquaintances. In prison he always maintained a calm front, but continually grumbled about the ignominious way in which he was treated, and of the nature of his food. He planned great battles upon the surrounding hills, in which tens of thousands were slain. He wrote bloodcurdling doggerel and filthy verses; quoted much poetry, in an erroneous manner, and applied it to his own position.

At his trial he never betrayed the least uneasiness when the most damaging testimony was given, and seemingly deemed it impossible that he could be convicted. He discharged counsel as his whims directed, engaging others in their stead. He would not allow the plea of insanity to be entertained by his lawyers, and got very angry if they mooted the question. He changed guardians twice, and wanted to change again, previous to his attaining his majority. He attained that age before his execution. When questioned by his guard, whilst in the Auburn prison, as to whether he robbed the Placer County Bank, or no, he merely answered, "If I did, it was just to show what I could do!" This statement he made with a very grandiose air. After his conviction but before leaving jail, he studied Spanish with one of his guards and made

good progress. He went to the gallows with great fortitude, and in silence.

From the foregoing history of this remarkable criminal, the most of which I have gathered since his execution, let us try and ascertain, if possible, whether the young man was a fiend in human shape, or insane. I will briefly sketch the symptoms of paranoia, as I have been able to glean them from the authorities I have had access to, and see whether they fit his case.

Paranoia (*para*, close to, and *nous*, understanding) has been divided into two types, early and late. (Paranoia originaria, and paranoia tarda, of Amadie and Kraft-Ebing.) It applies to a form of mental disease occurring in individuals capable of, at times, fine education and brilliant acquirements, yet possessing a decided mental twist. It has its origin in structural weakness of the nervous system, more often inherited than acquired, and bears a close relationship to mental imbecility. It is one of the rarest and most dangerous forms of mental disturbance, as the victim is able to *conceal his insane concepts* not only from his friends and the laity, but also from medical men, until an *outbreak of violent character* has taken place, which is not unlikely to *result in death or injury to others*. It is a disease with delusions and hallucinations of a chronically progressive nature, yet there is at the same time a retention of the reasoning faculties upon subjects other than those immediately involved in, and directly touching the person's mental defects, until there is a violent outbreak, or until the disease has progressed for years. The nucleus of the disease lies in systematized delusions of persecutions, or ambitious delirium. Up to the thirteenth or fifteenth year, the individual may pass an uneventful life, or may even be a brilliant scholar and a very merry and lovable companion, both in the family and out of it. Then begins the change. He no longer joins in the sports and amusements of his fellows. He drops all studies excepting along certain lines. He becomes cross and contentious in his family, and is contemptuous of all advice and restraint. He sits in dreamy reveries for hours at a time. He generally has grandiose ideas and persecutory delusions. He is indifferent to suffering outside of his own personality, about which he has morbid imaginings. He withdraws into his shell, and remains anxious, preoccupied with his misconceptions, and indifferent to all beyond the limits of his morbid egocentrism. In this stage of hypochondriacal depression or subjective analysis, he is mentally disquieted, and studies his morbid sensations, real or imaginary, and attaches importance to the most trivial symptoms. At a time when he should be making schoolboy love, and suffering from the milder attacks of love-sickness, he will have nothing to do with girls. As selfishness increases it expands into supreme egotism and vanity. He becomes suspicious, often of his own household, and thinks they do not treat him right, and that he is superior to them. Soon he is completely alienated from them, and acquires a delusion of persecution. Vanity and egotism brings delusions of

power and grandeur. He whose ambition outruns his wits may develop any kind of grandiose delusion. The moral sense lessens steadily from the beginning, until it is absent altogether. The paranoiac has no feeling of altruism, and gets no pleasure from giving pleasure. The pain and trouble of others cause no pain to him. Whether he becomes a criminal depends on circumstances, and on whether or not he has the pseudo-courage necessary to commit murder. He is always a liar, and frequently has perverted sexual instincts. Erotic and political paranoiacs are the types most prone to commit serious crimes. Paranoiacs are often so intelligent as to appear to be entirely responsible for their conduct when they come in conflict with the law. Many of their crimes look like the acts of sane men, and are carefully planned and cunningly executed. They also often commit crimes under the influence of sudden impulse. A paranoiac is, as a general rule, perfectly capable of advising others and for years the reasoning powers may be quite good for subjects which do not affect him. Craig says, "it should never be forgotten that it is the paranoiac who, above all others, is likely to commit acts of violence." He is cunning and scheming, capable both of devising a plan and choosing the best moment for its effective execution.

With this short summary of the symptoms of paranoia, taken from the best authorities; and from the foregoing history of Adolph Weber's few years of life, we can arrive at no other conclusion than that the unfortunate young man was insane when he planned and executed his abhorrent deed.

In view of what I have stated it might be pertinently asked why I did not raise my voice in his defense, before his execution. I had three reasons for not doing so. Firstly, owing to my close relations with the murdered family, I held a deep abhorrence for the perpetrator of the crime, and was blinded to his rights. Secondly, I like nearly all other general practitioners, never made a study of psychiatry, and did not recognize the symptoms of the disease when they lay open to any one skilled to read them. And lastly, I never knew the mass of this evidence, until after his death. I have picked it up piecemeal since then, and can truly say that I am exonerated, on this point alone, if blameworthy on the others.

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- Schule—Die Paranoia.